(c) if so, whether any inquiry has been made, so far, and the result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The import of wheat has been done at competitive international prices against the global tenders floated by STC/MMTC/PEC (Government of India Undertakings).

During 2006-07, 53.79 lakh tonnes of wheat was imported at weighted average price of US $ 205.35 per tonne *i.e.* Rs.9300/- per tonne (approx.). Further, during 2007-08, 17.69 lakh MT has been imported at a weighted average price of US $ 373.82 per tonne *i.e.* Rs. 14,800/- per tonne (approx.).

(c) Question does not arise.

Reduction in quota of rice to Kerala

1306.SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the representations had been submitted during the year 2008 to the Prime Minister's office for restoring the slashed and discontinued quota of rice allocated to the ration card holders of Kerala;

(b) if so, the details including the action taken and the quota of rice allotted to Kerala under the above scheme for the last five years, year-wise;

(c) if so, whether steps will be taken to restore the slashed and discontinued supply of rice; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) Representations had been submitted by Chief Minister of Kerala to the Prime Minister for increasing rice allocation under APL category. The details of the quota of rice allotted to Kerala, under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for the last five years are as under:

(Figures in thousand tons)

Year	AAY	BPL	APL	Total
2003-2004	118.057	502.847	1,361.040	1,981.944
2004-2005	165.560	365.292	1,361.040	1,891.892
2005-2006	207.088	334.172	1,361.040	1,902.300
2006-2007	248.331	317.514	1,361.040	1,926.885
2007-2008	250.260	318.792	307.008	876.060

It may be mentioned that full allocations of foodgrains under Below Poverty Line (BPL)/ Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) categories have been made as per norms @35 kg per family per month for all accepted number of BPL/AAY families.

While allocations of foodgrains for BPL and AAY categories are made @ 35 kg per family per month, allocations for APL category are made depending upon the availability of stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool. Allocations of foodgrains for the APL category were made in larger quantities during earlier period to liquidate surplus stocks available in the Central Pool. However, keeping in view the declining stocks position of foodgrains in the Central Pool from 2006-07, the allocation of wheat and rice under TPDS to States/UTs for the APL category have been rationalized with effect from June, 2006 and April, 2007 respectively, on the basis of offtake levels during the previous 3 years *i.e.* 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Presently the State of Kerala is being made monthly allocation of 28,833 tons of foodgrains (17,056 tons rice and 11,777 tons wheat) for APL category. Allocation of APL rice to Kerala during 2008-09 is as per applicable allocation norms *i.e.* based on average of offtake during 2006-07 and 2007-08. There is no reduction or discontinuation of rice quota to the State.

However, keeping in view the requests received from the State Government during the current year 2008-09 including the memorandum to PM under reference, as an exception to applicable allocation norms, the Central Government has:- made additional allocation of 89,000 tons of rice at APL rate to Kerala, thus increasing the total allocation of rice to the State under APL category to last year's offtake level of 2,94,000 tons.

Short supply of essential items due to truck operators' strike

1307. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there were short supplies of essential items due to truck operators' strike in July, 2008;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the impact of strike on prices of essential items; and

(d) the action taken against the hoarders during that period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) As per information gathered from different Newspapers, the truck operators' strike began on 2 July, 2008 and was called off on 4th July 2008, morning. There was no short supply reported of essential items due to truck operators' strike from 2nd to 4 July, 2008, as the retail prices of essential commodities namely wheat, rice, sugar, gram dal, tur dal, groundnut oil, vanaspati, mustard oil, potato, onion, tea, salt, atta and milk were either steady or declining during the period 1st to 7th July,2008 in 18 centers across the country monitored by this Department. The average price of perishables namely, fruits and vegetables were largely showing steady or declining trend. Prices of only beans, capsicum, cauliflower, cucumber, brinjal and grapes increased by 16 to 20 per cent during 2nd to 4th July 2008 as per data received from Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee, Delhi.

(d) The impact of the truck operators' strike on prices of essential items was by and large negligible, as the strike was for two days only. However, action is separately being taken on a